

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3127

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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MADRID ALSO FOR AMB CARLUCCI

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EAGR, PO

SUBJ: LAND INVASIONS AND AGRARIAN REFORM IN THE ALENTEJO

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO VISITED THE SOUTH CENTRAL ALENTEJO REGION (EVORA-ELVAS-FRONTIERA) DURING WEEK OF JUNE 9 CONFIRMED THAT LAND INVASIONS ARE CONTINUING BUT AT DECREASING RATE. ACCORDING TO PUBLISHED REPORTS OF AGRARIAN REFORM INSTITUTE (IRA) SUBCENTER IN EVORA, 21 ESTATES TOTALING 14,050 HECTARES HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED SINCE JANUARY OF THIS YEAR. LARGEST NUMBER OF OCCUPATIONS OCCURRED AFTER MARCH 11; EIGHT OF TOTAL TOOK PLACE IN APRIL. SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 1,000 INDIVIDUALS (850 MEN AND 190 WOMEN) HAVE TAKEN PART IN INVASIONS, ACCORDING IRA DATA.

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2. EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE TOLD BY FARM OPERATORS THAT COMMUNIST

CADRES WERE ACTIVELY SUPPORTING AND IN SOME CASES ACTUALLY LEADING THE INVASIONS. IN THE EVORA DISTRICT, INVASIONS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN CHECKED AFTER THE CIVIL GOVERNOR, UNDER PRESSURE FROM HARASSED FARM OPERATORS WHO THREATENED TO TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, REPORTEDLY ORDERED A STOP TO THE INVASIONS.

3. PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES IS EXPECTED TO ANNOUNCE ADDITIONAL AGRARIAN REFORM MEASURES DURING SCHEDULED VISIT TO EVORA JUNE 22. IN APPARENT EFFORT TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE FOR REFORM, REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNIST-DOMINATED AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ORGANIZATIONS FROM EVORA MET WITH VASCO GONCALVES AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER ON JUNE 17. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS TELL US THAT CONTENT OF PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS IS STILL BEING DISCUSSED. CONTINUING INTERNAL DEBATE MAY INDICATE SOME WITHIN GOP HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT LAUNCHING MAJOR AGRARIAN REFORM EFFORT AT THIS TIME GIVEN MANY PROBLEMS GOP MUST ALREADY FACE.
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